

Richard Charter
Defenders of Wildlife, Marine Program

April 5, 2007

Att: Melissa Miller-Henson
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
mlpacomments@resources.ca.gov

Re: *North-Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group*

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

Enclosed please find my resume and references for your consideration for the *North-Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group* for the upcoming Marine Life Protection Act process. I come from an agricultural family background, and grew up enjoying both freshwater and saltwater recreational fishing. I have, during my lifetime, personally observed evidence of declines in parts of the marine ecosystem along the California coastline. As a thirty-year resident of the Sonoma County coast who spent much of my childhood in the tidepools along this particular shoreline, I believe that my extensive background of involvement in coastal restoration and protection here in California, as well as direct participation in the Channel Islands Marine Reserves process, demonstrate my unique qualifications for this appointment. I have a successful track record of building effective partnerships with local and state elected officials, wildlife and habitat management agencies, Members of Congress, local and national nongovernmental agencies, academic institutions, and both commercial and sport fishing interests. These partnerships have led to the completion of projects such as the landmark Sonoma Baylands Wetlands Restoration Project, the Petaluma Marsh Restoration Project, the Channel Islands, Gulf of the Farallones, Cordell Bank, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries, the Channel Islands Marine Reserves Network, and the longstanding bipartisan congressional moratorium on offshore oil and gas drilling that protects the U.S. West Coast, East Coast, and Florida's Gulf Coast. I was also, in 1978, instrumental in working with local governments to secure the Point Reyes Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Exclusion Zone which permanently protects the shoreline of the Point Reyes National Seashore and adjacent coastal waters from federal offshore oil and gas leasing.

I have been involved in policy issues affecting the marine environment for over three decades, and have, in recent years, presented testimony on MLPA topics before the Blue Ribbon Task Force, the Ocean Protection Council, and the California Fish and Game Commission. I have formal training in environmental mediation and am oriented toward achieving respectful and collaborative "win-win" outcomes that maximize long-term benefits while minimizing or mitigating short-term economic consequences. I have extensive experience in working smoothly with teams of interested stakeholders, including the fishing industry and non-extractive interests, and in cooperating closely

with local elected officials and grassroots activist networks to translate complex scientific and technical data into language easily understandable by the public, in order to carry to fruition complex major projects with history-making outcomes. I am accustomed to working with partners at all levels of government and within grassroots organizations in time-sensitive situations requiring effective communication and close coordination. I have extensive experience as a legislative analyst, drafting and securing adoption and implementation of complex actions by the U.S. Congress and numerous state legislatures, including the California Assembly and State Senate, as well as various county Boards of Supervisors.

I am conversant with the details of each of the existing marine protected areas and *Area of Special Biological Significance* sites presently located within the North-Central California MLPA shoreline segment, and with surrounding waters and coastal features. I have extensive familiarity with siting criteria and regulatory parameters for both terrestrial and offshore renewable and nonrenewable energy resources, and am also conversant in the range of issues surrounding global climate change, including carbon sequestration and ocean acidification. For fourteen years, I served as Director of the California Local Government Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Coordination Program, bringing together grassroots activists, city councils, mayors, county commissioners, and California's tourism and fishing industries in response to federal offshore oil and gas leasing plans. I currently serve on NOAA's *Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council* and also hold a seat on the US Department of Energy's *Methane Hydrates Advisory Committee*, which advises Congress and the President on energy, climate, and marine ecosystem issues related to potential future commercial development of seafloor and permafrost sources of frozen natural gas hydrates. If I am selected for participation in the *North-Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group*, it would be my intent to represent not only the interests of traditional conservation constituencies, but also those who benefit from and enjoy the important commercial and recreational assets provided by our coastal resources, including commercial and sport fishermen and women. I maintain an extensive mail and email database which encompasses many of the individuals and organizations with a history of involvement in protection of the California coastline and its nearshore waters.

I also have a broad range of experience in working with regional, statewide, and national media to ensure that the communications tools of our society make the public an enthusiastic partner in securing winning outcomes for our environment, our global climate, and our regional economies.

Public information based on sound science will be essential to achieving an inclusive MLPA stakeholder process in this region, so that there is broadly-based "buy-in" for the results from all affected groups. Three federal National Marine Sanctuaries and their appointed advisory councils, five County Boards of Supervisors, several City Councils, one Council of Governments agency, and dozens of "user groups" of various kinds will all be affected in many ways by the MLPA process in this diverse region. To achieve an effective outcome under the MLPA, the most economically productive nearshore commercial fishing grounds need not necessarily be included in the final network of

MPA's. The commercial fishing industry along the North-Central California coastline has enjoyed a long and positive working relationship with the local, regional, and national conservation communities operating in this region. Past positive results of similar private/public collaborations between consumptive interests and non-consumptive users in this same area have included the creation of successful national models for watershed and stream corridor restoration, promotion of new National Marine Sanctuaries, cleanup of pollution from past terrestrial hard-rock mining activities, and achievement of improved water release regimens from existing dams for fisheries enhancement, wildlife preservation, and water quality protection. In this North-Central MLPA region, it is well within reach to achieve appropriate and well-planned geographic expansion of existing MPA's in state waters in a manner that largely avoids, and mitigates as necessary, any potential "space-use" conflicts. It is my intent to also help to establish a replicable model for considering the rest of the California coast in similar MLPA processes.

Serving on the *Regional Study Group*, if appointed, I would seek to represent the full spectrum of the broader conservation and non-extractive marine user community, as well as speaking directly on behalf of the nearly half-million members and supporters of Defenders of Wildlife nationwide, and Defenders' more than 100,000 members and supporters here in California.

It is my continuing goal to bring about constructive change in the management of our planet's remaining natural habitats and to help implement sustainable practices for our human communities. I believe that the coming decade will present new challenges and stunning opportunities for better stewardship of our environment. How our citizens, conservation organizations, fishing families, and local and state governments respond to current challenges and take advantage of present opportunities for change will determine the future health, and ultimately the prospects for the survival, of our living environment.

Thank you for your consideration for the MLPA *North-Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group*.

Sincerely,

Richard Charter
Marine Program
Defenders of Wildlife

Enclosures:

Resume and References, Santa Rosa Press Democrat Article
Citizen Guide to MPA's (co-author and designer)